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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 19 November 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. AWOONOR (Ghana)
(Vice-President)

- Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples [18]

  (a) Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

- (b) Report of the Secretary-General

  (c) Draft resolutions

  (d) Draft decision

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Awoonor (Ghana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 18 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

(a) REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (A/45/23; A/AC.109/1015 and Corr.1, A/AC.109/1016-A/AC.109/1021, A/AC.109/1023 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/AC.109/1024-A/AC.109/1036, A/AC.109/1038, A/AC.109/1041 and Corr.1, A/AC.109/1044 and A/AC.109/1048 and Corr.1/Rev. 1)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/45/644 and Corr.1)

(c) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/45/23 (part II) para.26; A/45/L.16, A/45/L.17)

(d) DRAFT DECISION (A/45/L.18)

The PRESIDENT: This morning the Assembly will begin its consideration of the question of the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, as a whole, under agenda item 18.

We have before us three draft resolutions, contained in paragraph 26, part II of the report of the Special Committee (A/45/23) and in documents A/45/L.16 and A/45/L.17, as well as one draft decision, contained in document A/45/L.18.

(The President)

I propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed today at 12 noon. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly adopts that proposal.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I therefore request representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe themselves as soon as possible.

I call on the Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to introduce the Committee's report.

Mr. SHAHEED (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Special Committee of 24): I have the honour to present to the General Assembly for its consideration the report (A/45/23) of the Special Committee covering its work during 1990.

The report, which relates inter alia to item 18 of the agenda, is submitted in accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 44/101, of 11 December 1989, on the implementation of the Declaration, by which the Assembly requested the Special Committee to continue to seek suitable means for the immediate and full implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) in all Territories that have not yet attained independence and, in particular, to formulate specific proposals for the elimination of the remaining manifestations of colonialism.

At its forty-fourth session the General Assembly, by adopting resolution 44/100, of 11 December 1989, also mandated the Special Committee to undertake a series of activities in observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration,

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including, among other activities, the holding of two regional seminars on the general theme of decolonization.

During the year the Special Committee was able to discharge the tasks thus entrusted to it by the Assembly and to submit appropriate recommendations on all the items referred to it for consideration and report, by meeting between February and August and by holding consultations throughout the year among its members.

Aware that the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration would be an appropriate occasion for evaluating the progress achieved during the past 30 years, and in accordance with resolution 44/100, the Special Committee held two regional seminars, one at Vanuatu in May and the other at Barbados in June. The reports of the two regional seminars contain the views expressed by those representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories who attended the seminars. Each report also contains a summary of discussions which highlight the main issues raised and the views expressed by the participants in the seminars. The reports of the two regional seminars are contained in documents A/AC.109/1040 and Corr.1 and A/AC.109/1043.

On the basis of the general debate on the thirtieth anniversary held during its August session, and following subsequent consultations, the Special Committee unanimously adopted a draft resolution on the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration, which is submitted to the General Assembly for its approval in chapter II of the present report.

Bearing in mind in particular the specific requests addressed to it by the General Assembly in resolution 44/101, the Special Committee reviewed during the year the implementation of the Declaration in relation to the remaining Territories and formulated a series of recommendations with a view to accelerating the pace of

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decolonization and facilitating the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the peoples in these Territories.

In addition, the Special Committee submitted recommendations specifically relating to activities of foreign economic and other interests which are impeding the implementation of the Declaration; military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration; the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations; and information transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter.

The Special Committee also devoted considerable attention during the year to the decolonization of the small island Territories. In that connection, the Special Committee was especially mindful of the fact that the United Nations visiting missions have provided effective means of ascertaining the situation in those small Territories. Accordingly, it once again stressed the importance of dispatching such missions to colonial Territories in order to facilitate the speedy implementation of the Declaration.

Within the context of the question of the list of Territories to which the Declaration is applicable, the Commitee also took up separately an item entitled "Special Committee decision of 17 August 1989 concerning Puerto Rico". In that regard, the Committee, following the hearing of representatives of a number of organizations, took a further decision on the item, as set out in chapter I of the report.

As reflected in chapter III of its report, the Special Committee carried out a number of other tasks entrusted to it by the General Assembly in various resolutions, as well as tasks arising from its own previous decisions, relating to

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the question of publicity to be given to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

In that regard, the Committee again reiterated the importance of the United Nations effecting the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization as an instrument for furthering the purposes and principles of the Charter and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and for mobilizing world public opinion in support of the peoples of colonial Territories. Bearing in mind the important role being played in the decolonization process by an increasing number of non-governmental organizations, the Special Committee once again encouraged those organizations to continue to disseminate information on the situation in the remaining colonial Territories and on the position of the United Nations with regard to decolonization.

During the year the Committee took part in a number of international conferences and meetings convened by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. In the light of the constructive results achieved in that regard and in keeping with related decisions of the Assembly, the Committee decided to continue to maintain close contact with the organizations concerned and to participate in the related conferences, seminars and other special meetings dealing with decolonization arranged by those organizations, as well as by other United Nations bodies concerned.

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I should like to draw members' attention to the proposals outlined in section J of Chapter 1, "Future work", which, the Special Committee hopes, will meet with the Assembly's approval, and enable it to proceed with the effective discharge of the task that remains to be completed.

The Special Committee recommended that the General Assembly renew its appeal to the administering Powers concerned to take all necessary steps for the implementation of the Declaration and the relevant United Nations resolutions in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples of the colonial Territories. In that connection the Special Committee, bearing in mind the useful results achieved as a consequence of the active participation of the administering Powers in its work, recommended that the General Assembly again urge the administering Powers to co-operate or continue to co-operate with the Special Committee in the discharge of its mandate and, in particular, to participate actively in its work relating to the Territories under their respective administrations.

Further, bearing in mind the affirmations by the General Assembly that direct association of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies was an effective means of promoting the progress of the peoples in those Territories towards a position of equality with the States Members of the United Nations, the Special Committee recommended that the General Assembly invite the administering Powers to allow representatives of the Territories concerned to participate in the discussions in the Fourth Committee and in the Special Committee on the items relating to their respecive countries. In that connection, taking into account the views expressed by the representatives of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories at the seminars organized by the Special Committee in Vanuatu and in Barbados in observance of the thirtieth

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anniversary of the Declaration, the Special Committee at its next session will consider, in co-operation with the administering Powers, how to intensify and improve the participation of the representatives of those Territories in the work of the Committee within the existing resources.

The General Assembly may also wish to renew its appeal to all States, the specialized agencies and other organizations within the United Nations system to comply with the various requests addressed to them by the United Nations in its resolutions on the question of decolonization.

In the preparation of the proposed programme the Chairman of the Special Committee, Ambassador Tesfaye Tadesse, has held consultations throughout the year with all concerned. The arduous work he carried out and the positive contributions he made in this connection are deeply appreciated by all the members of the Special Committee. On behalf of the Special Committee, I commend the report to the attention of the General Assembly.

Before concluding, permit me to express to all the members of the Special Committee, and in particular to its Chairman, Ambassador Tadesse of Ethiopia, to the three Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada of Cuba, Mr. Sverre Bergh Johansen of Norway and Mr. Alexander Slaby of Czechoslovakia, and to the Chairman and Rapporteur of the Sub-Committee on Small Territories, Mr. Ghazi Jomaa of Tunisia and Mr. Dag Mjaaland of Norway, respectively, my deep gratitude for the co-operation and support I have received from them, which has greatly facilitated my task as Rapporteur.

The PRESIDENT: I now call upon the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, who will introduce three draft resolutions in the course of his statement.

Mr. TADESSE (Ethiopia), Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Special Committee of 24): Since the Rapporteur of the Special Committee has given an account of the work of the Special Committee for the year, I should like to take this opportunity to comment briefly on some of the principal developments, as well as the remaining tasks before us, in the field of decolonization.

As we mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration this year, I am deeply conscious that as a direct consequence of the process of decolonization that has taken place during the period this virtually universal world Organization has come to be endowed with a growing vitality, maturity and a greater sense of responsibility and responsiveness to many a problem afflicting our planet. A transformation of tremendous magnitude on the map of the world and in international relations has been brought about through collective determination and the acknowledgement of a truly global interest in the pursuit of freedom and in the concern for the protection of human rights.

Indeed, nowhere has one of the major functions of the United Nations been more clearly validated and more positively demonstrated as an essential and viable agent for peace than in the field of decolonization. During this period of revolutionary change the United Nations has played an important role in a process that has brought independence to hundreds of millions of peoples throughout the world.

Much of the Organization's work in this regard has been accomplished under the auspices of the General Assembly. Its commitment to the cause of decolonization and its determination reached new heights in 1960 when the General Assembly adopted the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, an instrument that codified over a decade and a half of the Organization's experience in decolonization in pursuit of the principles embodied in the Charter.

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Special Committee of 24)

In adopting that Declaration the General Assembly made it clear that the continued denial of the fundamental right of self-determination of dependent peoples throughout the world not only contravened the provisions of the Charter but also impeded the promotion of world peace and co-operation. Its call for immediate steps to enable dependent peoples to enjoy complete independence and freedom in accordance with their freely expressed wishes reflected the moral obligations assumed by Member States under the Charter.

Since then, more than 80 million people have emerged from dependent status, and some 60 former colonial Territories have become sovereign Member States of the Organization, while others have also become active members of the United Nations system of organizations. To facilitate that process and to assist them in a most effective way has been a formidable task for the United Nations, as many of the obstances that had confronted those Territories had at the outset appeared intractable. Through the sustained and concerted efforts of the Organization, however, many difficulties have been overcome, and I believe the international community can be proud of the crucial role it has played in bringing that about.

Much of the credit for this is due, of course, to the constant endeavours of the members of the Special Committee of 24. The Special Committee has not only kept world attention focused on the problems of decolonization but has also mobilized moral and political support for the dependent peoples in their efforts to realize their right to self-determination. To that end it has suggested a number of effective measures addressed to specific situations existing in colonial Territories.

(Mr. Tadesse, Chairman,
Special Committee of 24)

As the Assembly is about to commence its annual review of the situation with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, I wish, on behalf of the members of the Special Committee of 24, and on my own behalf, to express profound satisfaction at the fact that the debate this year is taking place with the participation of the representative of the independent Republic of Namibia as a sovereign Member of this Organization. Indeed, in connection with the related work of the Fourth Committee during the current session, we have already observed the active and constructive contribution made by the delegation of Namibia, and I have no doubt that Assembly deliberations on the item before us will be enhanced by their presence among us today.

Within the context of the thirtieth anniversary activities approved by the Assembly, this year the Special Committee held two regional seminars, one in Vanuatu in May and the other in Barbados in June. The two seminars provided an opportunity to reflect on how best to meet the expectations and needs of the remaining colonial Territories. They also afforded the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the various regions the opportunity to participate in the deliberations at the seminars.

The seminars also provided the opportunity for the Committee to undertake a comprehensive review of the specific problems of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. The contributions of participants, particularly those from Non-Self-Governing Territories, will assist the Committee to chart a more effective course for its work and to adjust its approach and methodology it uses in the fulfilment of its mandate. As reflected in its report, the Committee also decided to make use wherever possible of the proposals and suggestions made at the

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seminars, with a view to enhancing and rationalizing its work in a continuing process. In that regard, the extensive exchange of views held at the two seminars, especially the exchanges with the representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories, and various proposals contained in the summary of discussions in the reports of the two seminars will continue to provide the Committee with an important basis for formulating programmes appropriate for follow-up action.

On behalf of the Special Committee, I wish to thank once again the Governments of Vanuatu and Barbados for having enabled us to hold these important seminars in their respective capitals and for the co-operation and assistance they rendered the Committee.

I wish to thank the administering Powers concerned for their co-operation in facilitating the representation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the two seminars.

The remaining small Territories in the Caribbean and in the Pacific face different and often complex problems, partly because of their small territorial size and population, and frequently because of their isolation and limited resources, as is pointed out in the relevant conclusions and recommendations of the Special Committee. These considerations cannot, however, be allowed to interfere with or limit the rights and privileges of the peoples concerned, particularly their right to make their own decisions in respect of their future.

I should like to underscore the responsibility of the administering Powers, in the discharge of their obligations under the Charter, to intensify programmes of political education for the peoples of the Territories under their administration in order to deepen their awareness, in relation to their future status, of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and of the Declaration.

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Special Committee of 24)

In their discharge of their primary responsibility as set out in the Charter the administering Powers should do their utmost to ensure that the economies of the Territories they administer are soundly based; to that end, they should continue to organize effective development programmes, enlisting to the maximum extent the assistance available from the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations. Such programmes should continue to be carefully structured to protect and safeguard the best interests, both present and future, of the peoples of the Territories concerned.

In the light of the constructive role played in the past by visiting missions, the Special Committee continues to attach vital importance to the dispatch of such missions to dependent Territories. These missions have proved an effective means of collecting up-to-date, first-hand information on political, economic and social conditions in the Territories, and of ascertaining the wishes and aspirations of their peoples concerning their future status. In this regard, I would strongly urge all administering Powers to co-operate, or continue to co-operate, with the Special Committee by actively participating in its work and by inviting United Nations missions to visit the Territories under their administration.

Some of these and other recommendations of the Special Committee, as approved by the Fourth Committee last month, will shortly be considered by the Assembly, and I wish to express my confident hope that they will receive the Assembly's endorsement.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay a particular tribute to Ambassador Martin Adouki, the Chairman of the Fourth Committee, for his outstanding leadership and statesmanship in enabling the Committee to conclude its work

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in an exemplary manner. His personal dedication to the cause of the peoples concerned is well known and his country's contribution to the process of decolonization has been amply demonstrated throughout the session.

During the current session we have often heard it said that the work of the Organization in the field of decolonization is drawing to a close and that we no longer need to waste our time and efforts on business that is about to be concluded. Indeed, no one can deny the fact that the achievements in this field since the Organization's inception represent a singularly noteworthy success story in the annals of this community of nations. Yet we must at all times remind ourselves of the solemn obligations assumed by all Member States under the Charter in respect of the peoples of the Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories. In keeping with the relevant provisions of the Charter, this Assembly, in its decisions and resolutions, has long established the tenets and procedures for promoting and ensuring the well-being of the inhabitants of these Territories. As long as there remains a single Non-Self-Governing Territory falling within the purview of the Charter, the work of the Organization in this field must continue unabated. To that end, all necessary resources must be placed at its disposal. Economy in the use of resources - too often used deliberately as a pretext - could be achieved most effectively through the full and speedy implementation of the Declaration, thus reducing the list of colonial Territories to none.

As we move closer to the day when the last vestiges of colonialism will be eradicated from the face of the earth, it is more than ever necessary to ensure that the genuine interests of the inhabitants of those remaining Territories continue to be of paramount concern. We must do our utmost to bring about the free and unrestricted conditions which could enable the peoples concerned to express their true aspirations and wishes for their future status.

(Mr. Tadesse, Chairman,
Special Committee of 24)

On behalf of the members of the Special Committee, I wish to reiterate to the Assembly the Committee's resolute commitment and determination in continuing to do its utmost in the search for the most appropriate ways and means to ensure the implementation of the Declaration.

(Mr. Tadesse, Chairman,
Special Committee of 24)

Permit me to make a few personal comments at this stage. This year, as in previous years, as Chairman I have enjoyed the fullest co-operation of my colleagues in both the Committee and the Secretariat and I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all of them. My particular thanks go to my friends and colleagues the other officers of the Committee: Ambassador Alarcon de Quesada of Cuba, Mr. Bergh Johansen of Norway and Mr. Alexander Slaby of Czechoslovakia, our three Vice-Chairmen, and Mr. Mohammad Najdat Shaheed of the Syrian Arab Republic, our Rapporteur. For me, as Chairman of the Special Committee, it has been an honour and privilege to work with such dedicaced colleagues.

Our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, has shown consistent interest in the field of decolonization. We are grateful to him for his interest, which has ensured the maximum co-operation and assistance on his part.

I should like also to pay a particular tribute to the Under-Secretary-General of the Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship, Mr. Abdulrahim A. Farah, for his assistance and continued collaboration, and, through him, my gratitude goes also to all the members of his Department.

It befits the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration this year that the Committee has been able to agree to put forward for consideration by the General Assembly the text of a draft resolution, contained in document A/45/23, part II, chapter 2, paragraph 26, encompassing all the fundamentals of the unceasing process of decolonization. By adopting this draft resolution the Assembly would uphold the validity of the objectives of the Declaration and reiterate, among other issues, the collective responsibility of Member States, the United Nations and its system of organizations to extend assistance to the peoples of the remaining colonial Territories.

(Mr. Tadesse, Chairman,
Special Committee of 24)

I am confident that the draft resolution, when adopted, will serve as yet another milestone in the history of our Organization's endeavour in the field of decolonization and will assist in articulating further the course of action to be taken towards the fulfilment of our objectives.

As the Assembly is well aware, the year 1990 marks the beginning of the Decade for Decolonization. This is a period in which the international community has pledged to intensify its efforts with a view to making the world free from what we all now consider an anachronism - colonialism in all its forms and manifestations. If all concerned dedicate themselves to the realization of these objectives, within the next 10 years all remnants of colonialism will have been eliminated from the face of the globe, thus ushering in a safer and freer world for men and women the world over.

Having briefly reviewed some of the principal developments in the field of decolonization, and in keeping with long-established practice, I should like, on behalf of the sponsors, to introduce the two draft resolutions submitted under this item and contained in documents A/45/L.16 and A/45/L.17. As these two draft resolutions reflect both the developments and the problems I have just outlined, I need not, I am sure, elaborate on their substance.

Draft resolution A/45/L.16 deals with the general aspects of decolonization. By this draft resolution the Assembly would, among other things, renew the mandate of the Special Committee.

The draft resolution contained in document A/45/L.17 deals with dissemination of information on decolonization. By this draft resolution the Assembly would once again underscore the importance of publicity as an instrument for furthering the aims and purposes of the Declaration.

(Mr. Tadesse, Chairman, Special Committee of 24)

Speaking on behalf of the sponsors, I wish to commend these draft resolutions to the members of the Assembly for their serious attention and unanimous approval.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the first speaker in the debate on this item, the representative of Congo.

Mr. ADOUKI (Congo) (interpretation from French): The debate on the fundamental question of decolonization at this forty-fifth session of the General Assembly will become part of history. Indeed, this debate could, by the very nature of things, be mine: first, because of my status as representative of Congo, a country which for the past 17 years has had the honour of being a member of the Special Committee of 24; and also because of my present status as Chairman of the Fourth Committee.

How can we make sure that this debate, which is to make a final evaluation, 30 years later, of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, does not get bogged down in a surfeit of words that would dilute the essential points?

I do not wish to risk locking myself into a single image. I should like to base my statement on the consciousness of the uniqueness, in 1990, of the work of the Fourth Committee and also that of the Special Committee of 24, which, in the opinion of a growing number of delegations, is being orchestrated in a way that seems increasingly if not suspicious, at least terribly marked by a kind of ritualism that perpetuates the stereotyped images that hark back to the 1960s.

I do not know by what quirk of fate I was called upon to assume the chairmanship of the Fourth Committee at the very time when Namibia, the last large African colony finally to attain independence, was participating for the first time as a Member State at a session of the General Assembly. It was a great moment

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

indeed. We all celebrated it with deep emotion, just as we had celebrated the outstanding success of the United Nations in finally achieving Namibia's independence.

The happy occasion of the commemoration in 1990 of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration reinforces that special event. It has certainly marked a turning-point and has also crystallized a new faith in the future of countries and peoples that still aspire to take control of their own history, to participate fully in shaping the common future of mankind.

We know that for the 18 Territories that are still non-self-governing - under the United Nations definition - that is an irreplaceable contribution. It will be effective only when these remaining Territories exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. The Charter and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples oblige us to continue our efforts to that end.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

Thus the international community continues to be concerned about the fate of those Territories. For the General Assembly itself, the fact that the remaining 18 Non-Self-Governing Territories are mere shreds of empires scattered throughout the Caribbean and the Pacific and that their populations are small and their resources modest should not impede the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination.

It is therefore important for us to continue to arouse interest in the future of these small Territories, which are generally ostracized by the mass media or relegated to the background of current events. Dissemination of information on decolonization by the Special Committee of 24 reflects this state of affairs. It requires the prior co-operation of the administering Powers in the collection of reliable data in the Territories.

For these peoples - and the statements made by their representatives at the regional seminars organized by the Special Committee of 24 this year in Barbados and in Vanuatu have confirmed this - we are the umbilical cord that links them directly with the international community and, indeed, in the words of some of them, we are their only recourse in which they place their hopes.

These peoples are aware of the responsibilities of the administering Powers. Indeed, they believe that the exercise of the right to self-determination should be preceded by an adequate economic and social development that will prevent an ill-prepared final choice without excluding any of the options included in General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV).

In this connection, I cannot fail to welcome the valuable assistance given by the specialized agencies and the other organizations of the United Nations family to the economic and social development of these Territories.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

Here, I wish to commend the recent initiative with a view to elaborating a development strategy for island countries under the aegis of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). We hope that the report of the governmental experts who met at United Nations Headquarters last June will be widely disseminated, including in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Perhaps it will help to embody the renewed hope for a mobilization for additional resources to speed up the economic and social development of these Territories.

May I be permitted to make a sports analogy. In any long-distance race, usually it is the home stretch that is the most difficult, and the home stretch in the work of the Fourth Committee is the final years of this century. We venture to hope that they will mark, in keeping with the recommendations in General Assembly resolution 43/47 of 22 November 1988, the end of the process of decolonization.

That is why it is inevitably towards the attainment of that goal that our efforts should be geared. In this task, the co-operation of the administering Powers is essential.

With the hopes and the concerns of the Fourth Committee in mind, my response is to continue my role until the conclusion of my mandate; nor will my efforts cease at the sound of the gavel ending this debate. It goes without saying that I shall exercise my functions and make continuous efforts with open-mindedness, imagination and adaptability and with due regard to new developments.

Thus, at a time when the system of assessing the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples is being buffeted because of a certain inability to change, or merely because it might fail to mirror the positive developments on the international scene, it would be unwise blindly to reject the suggestions and remarks, even the critical comments, made in this respect during the debates in the Fourth Committee, which, doubtless, some delegations will repeat here.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

To my mind, a reading of this controversy can be summed up in the new strong desire to adapt, as a matter of necessity, to new realities our methods and our approach; this, however, without prejudicing in any way respect for the principles enunciated in the Charter and the Declaration.

We are all well aware that, thanks to the Fourth Committee's deep commitment to these principles over the past decades, it has conducted its work with great distinction. Today, the Fourth Committee can justly claim successes in its great task in the field of decolonization, to the extent that a legitimate question now arises as to its own future, which is in inverse proportion to the magnitude of the positive results it has achieved.

I mentioned earlier that there remained only 18 Non-Self-Governing Territories. To judge by the discussions, the enlightening fact is that out of two and a half months of the annual sessions common in the decade of the 1960s, the Fourth Committee was reduced to sit for a mere five weeks in order to complete its work, as was the case in 1989, and also now in 1990. Nobody need feel any embarrassment about this satisfactory accomplishment of its decolonizing mission, which explains the attrition of items on its agenda; it is up to the appropriate bodies of the United Nations to decide upon this point in due course.

In conclusion, I should like to note that this year the debates in the Fourth Committee have, without any doubt, shown that the process of decolonization has reached a significant stage. All those who participated in it can attest to this - the members participating in the work of the Special Committee of 24, as well as other representatives in the Fourth Committee.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

Consequently, they will decade whether to embark on a truly new start. The goal is to formulate our recommendations in a more realistic way based on consensus. For my part, I have noted - from the preliminary consultations I have had to hold in the light of these discussions - a few ideas about how the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee of 24 might co-operate next year in order specifially to follow up some of the suggestions made by Member States.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

One of my main recommendations concerns the possibility of setting up a working group made up of the officers of the Fourth Committee and of the Special Committee and other representatives, including representatives of the administering Powers. This would create a bridge towards the establishment of closer relations and co-operation between the two bodies, which normally meet at different times of the year but basically work on the same questions.

It is my understanding that a few years ago the Fourth Committee abandoned the procedure of formulating its own recommendations. Should it go back to that practice, or should the practice that has been established for it whereby it works almost exclusively on texts that have already been adopted in the Special Committee be retained? The proposed working group could discuss this and other matters.

My objective in proposing the strengthening of co-operation between the two Committees is the attainment of better results, consensus decisions which might truly serve our common goal, which is the speedy decolonization of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. As Chairman of the Fourth Committee, I am available to Member States to continue, in consultation with my colleague, the Chairman of the Special Committee of 24, the dialogue that has been one of the dominating features of our discussions this year.

I hope to be in a position to establish the working group within a reasonable time so that we can get down to work as soon as possible and produce specific suggestions for submission to the forty-sixth session.

My final word is for those delegations which, in our common concern to ensure that the institutions of our Organization will become increasingly effective and make a better contribution to the attainment of the purposes of the Charter, have encouraged me in this initiative. I am deeply grateful to them.

Ms. ATTAH (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation has had several opportunities to congratulate Mr. Guido de Marco of Malta most warmly on his well-deserved election. Our faith and confidence in his diplomatic skills have been borne out by the competent manner in which he has discharged his onerous responsibilities so far. I, therefore, wish simply to reiterate my delegation's support and co-operation.

In no area has the United Nations registered greater achievement since its inception than in the area of decolonization. Out of 750 million people under colonial rule in 1945 there remain only about 2 million people who have yet fully to exercise the universal right to self-determination. Since 1945 millions of people, in 59 countries, have gained their freedom and independence. The achievement of the United Nations in this field has truly been significant and impressive.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1514 (XV) by this body on 14 December 1960. Although Nigeria was barely two months old both as a sovereign nation and as a Member of the United Nations, we were closely involved in the efforts that went into the elaboration of that resolution. Resolution 1514 (XV), which embodies the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, sets out the terms of reference for the United Nations in the area of decolonization.

The principle that neither the size of a territory nor the extent of the social, economic, cultural and political development of its people should prevent the exercise of the right to self-determination is enshrined in the Declaration. At all times, the only litmus test for the exercise of the inalienable right to self-determination must be the freely expressed will of the people themselves.

(Ms. Attah, Nigeria)

The Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria hold this principle sacrosanct and therefore condemn any attempt to deny, modify or abridge it. We have condemned, and will continue to condemn, colonialism wherever and in whatever guise it occurs. It is our view that colonialism can be neither reformed nor beautified. Our common global home must therefore be freed of this pernicious scourge, which dehumanizes its victims and expropriates their patrimony.

In this regard, my delegation reaffirms its endorsement of resolution 43/47, of 22 November 1988, by which the Assembly declared the period 1990-2000 the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. We have taken note of the Secretary-General's report in this regard. Nigeria stands ready to make any suitable contribution towards the full realization of the objective of the International Decade.

As the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, stated in his message on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of resolution 1514 (XV),

"Perhaps no other people suffered the worst ravages of colonialism more than the people and continent of Africa."

Nigeria is therefore delighted to note that with Namibia's independence early this year the colonial era is fast coming to an end on our continent. We shall never tire of working towards the complete eradication of the last vestiges of colonialism in Africa.

Africa's current social and economic crises are not unconnected with the havoc inflicted in the continent by colonialism. The skewed socio-economic infrastructure and the distorted economies bequeathed by the colonial authorities have proved very difficult to restructure despite the determined efforts of many

(Ms. Attah, Nigeria)

African Governments. The inequitable international economic system, which has condemned many African countries to perpetual production of primary commodities, has also rendered even more difficult attempts to reorient the colonial structures inherited by African countries. I need hardly mention the psychological and mental violence which colonialism unleashed on Africans.

(Ms. Attah, Nigeria)

It is for these and other reasons that my delegation continues to echo the call first made in 1980 by the then President of our country. We believe that the institution of a decade of reparations and restitution to Africa is something not only whose time has come but that is long overdue, given the ravages caused by colonialism in the continent. This call is predicated on a thorough appreciation of the history, economics and psychology of colonialism. The African continent was depopulated and its resources depleted and plundered as happened in no other continent in the world. We are therefore confident that Africa's claims will be carefully considered, although no compensation can replace the losses the continent has suffered.

My delegation has already welcomed the evolving international trend towards peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts. We have also expressed the hope that this positive trend will be further encouraged, deepened and applied at all times. Let us not allow aberrations that tend to detract from the dominant pattern to discourage us from strengthening the emerging pattern of international relations.

It is in this connection that Nigeria takes note of the positive developments on the questions of Western Sahara, New Caledonia and the Falkland Islands (Malvinas). We particularly welcome the restoration of full diplomatic relations between Argentina and the United Kingdom, two countries with which we maintain excellent bilateral relations.

On New Caledonia, we have steadily monitored the implementation of the Matignon and Oudinot agreements. We are aware that several views have been expressed on aspects of those agreements - views that are not necessarily compatible with each other. Nevertheless, we are confident that, given the political will, no obstacle can remain insurmountable. The people of New Caledonia must and, we believe, will be given an opportunity in 1998 to express themselves on

(Ms. Attah, Nigeria)

their political future. In the mean time, it is only proper that the fruits of socio-economic development be extended to all parts of the Territory, including the northern and island provinces, where most of the indigenous Melanesian population lives.

Perhaps no other colonial dispute troubles the Government and people of Nigeria more than the question of Western Sahara, since the conflict involves two brother people of our continent. We are therefore delighted to note the recent positive developments on this issue. We are indeed eager to see the resolution of all the outstanding issues, to enable full and early implementation of the joint Organization of African Unity and United Nations settlement proposals already accepted in principle by the parties to the conflict.

Nigeria stands ready to play any suitable role in the proposed United Nations mission in connection with the referendum in Western Sahara. The fratricidal conflict in Western Sahara has taken a heavy toll in material and human terms. Africa can ill afford a continuation of this crisis, which is like an ill wind that blows no good to anyone. Let us therefore do everything possible to solve this seemingly intractable problem on the north-western tip of the African continent. We particularly urge the Kingdom of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front to bury the hatchet and co-operate in the implementation of the settlement proposals. In this connection, we commend the Secretary-General and the successive Chairmen of the Organization of African Unity, who have left no stone unturned in the search for peace for Western Sahara. We also welcome the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 658 (1990) approving the preliminary report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the settlement proposals. We urge the Secretary-General and his Special Representative not to relax their efforts to move things forward on the issue of Western Sahara.

(Ms. Attah, Nigeria)

Although only 18 mainly small island Territories are currently inscribed on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, the colonial era is not yet completely over. We should therefore not be complacent. Nigeria will not rest on its oars until every colonized man or woman, young or old, is free, especially in view of the fact that many of the remaining colonies have large populations of African descent. We must not allow ourselves to enter the next century with the excess baggage of colonialism weighing us down. In this final decade of the twentieth century, let us give effect to our collective determination to make our world truly free of colonialism.

The search for answers to the several socio-economic, political and ecological challenges facing mankind demands our collective and undivided attention. Colonialism is an anachronism that must be uprooted - root, stem and branch. It is a blight on the body politic of our global family and a sad chapter in the annals of world history. People everywhere must therefore be freed from its stifling grip if they are to make meaningful contributions to international society. It is the hope of the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that the next century will see the true inauguration of a world that is free of colonialism. In this regard, we commend the tireless efforts of the Committee of 24, which has spearheaded our collective efforts to get rid of colonialism. History and posterity will not let those efforts go unnoticed.

Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea): Decolonization is one of the most outstanding United Nations success stories. This success story is an achievement of which the members of the international community must be proud. It is also an achievement which the United Nations is rightly and proudly celebrating this year.

The Government and people of Papua New Guinea are proud to be part of this, both as a former dependent Territory and people and as an independent State Member

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

of the United Nations since 1975. We reaffirm our dedication and commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and pledge our continued support in promoting them to the best of our abilities.

The year 1990 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the historic 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The Government and people of Papua New Guinea are happy to join the international community in celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration. We reaffirm our full commitment, in solidarity with all the colonized peoples of the world and with the Members of the United Nations, to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

The year 1990 also marks the beginning of the proclaimed International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. The Government and people of Papua New Guinea are determined and committed to co-operate fully with the international community in completely eradicating the inhuman and abhorrent system of apartheid, racism and colonialism from the face of the Earth by the year 2000.

Decolonization is unfortunately far from complete; there is still so much to be done. Neo-colonialism is digging in its heels in many parts of the globe. Economic colonialism is well known, and it too is digging in its heels in many parts of the globe.

Intellectual colonialism is the subtlest form of colonialism. It is very difficult to identify and deal with, and it is very much alive everywhere. In education and child psychology, we talk of moulding the minds of innocent children, who have cultural and social norms, values and attitudes based on their societies. But very often those norms, values and attitudes which we develop and build into our school curricula and teacher-training programmes are very much in conflict with the cultural norms, values and attitudes of the society in which people are expected to live as useful and constructive members or citizens.

Decolonization is still far from completion - whether the United Nations has 18 dependent Non-Self-Governing Territories on its list or even one or none at all. There are still some Territories to which the 1960 Declaration on decolonization is applicable - such as New Caledonia - but which are not yet on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

My delegation pleads with the United Nations and the Special Committee on decolonization to review its list of Non-Self-Governing Territories and to ensure that implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and a declaration on the eradication of colonialism by the year 2000 is smooth, successful and truly complete.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

The year 1990 has unfortunately witnessed an ugly and new form of colonialism using modern methods and weapons of warfare. The invasion of Kuwait and its continued occupation by Iraq testifies to the fact that colonialism is alive, in its most dangerous form, and that it is a threat to the health of our global environment, our economic and social well-being, and our international peace and security.

The likely use of chemical, nuclear and other dangerous weapons in a likely war in the Gulf region as a consequence of Iraq's invasion and continued occupation of Kuwait poses a real threat to international peace and security and also to all living organisms on earth, including human beings and their societies.

Colonialism is far from over. It appears in many different forms. The international community must critically and quickly examine the evil disease and find the best and most effective treatments or solutions so that the objectives of the declarations on decolonization and the eradication of colonialism are put into effect by the year 2000.

Papua New Guinea is more than willing to assist with the examination and identification of the problems associated with colonialism and decolonization in order that more relevant and appropriate solutions are amicably agreed to in line with the positive changes which are taking place in the world, and implemented for the purpose of completely eradicating the evils of apartheid, racism and colonialism by our target date.

We believe that some changes are needed in the United Nations in order for the Organization properly to execute its task in decolonization. But these changes must be genuine, and they must be in line with the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the declaration of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

The Government of Papua New Guinea, by a letter addressed to the President of the General Assembly in November 1984, requested the Organization to consider its possible membership of the Special Committee on decolonization in the knowledge that Australia, a country of the Pacific region, was going to withdraw its membership in 1985. Australia has withdrawn and there is a vacancy. We are still very keenly interested in joining the Special Committee of 24 and would sincerely like to request the Assembly to give its positive consideration to our request at the present session under item 18 of the agenda, noting that the relevant consultations have been going on now for five years since it was put to the Assembly.

Most of the remaining Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories are in the Pacific and the Caribbean. Papua New Guinea and other Pacific island States and their people are committed to a nuclear-free and independent Pacific. We sincerely hope that the members of the international community will lend their useful support to the achievement of this important goal.

In conclusion, may I take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairman of the Special Committee on decolonization, Mr. Tesfaye Tadesse, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, and the members of the Committee for their untiring and excellent efforts in the field of decolonization. We thank them for their useful work and for the Committee's reports to the General Assembly. We assure Mr. Tadesse and the Committee of our undivided support and commitment to the important task of writing the last chapter in the history of decolonization.

We should also like to congratulate and thank Mr. Martin Adouki, Chairman of the Fourth Committee, for the efficient and constructive manner in which he guided and concluded the work of the Committee. He and the members of the Fourth Committee will continue to enjoy the support and commitment of our Government to

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

the cause of equality, freedom and independence for all the colonized peoples of the world. We wish them success in our common mission.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Yugoslavia, who will speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and will introduce the draft decision.

Mr. SILOVIC (Yugoslavia): The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples is one of the greatest achievements in the history of the United Nations. Its basic principles and their application are a true reflection of the democratic developments in the world in the last 30 years. Among them, equal rights and self-determination, as well as the right of peoples to enjoy sovereignty in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, are the corner-stones of the new world order that is emerging today.

In the process of the implementation of the Declaration most colonial countries have gained independence and have joined our Organization. The independence of Namibia after more than 100 years of colonial rule represents a great success for the United Nations and a commendable example of co-operation for the entire international community.

(Mr. Silovic, Yugoslavia)

Lately we have witnessed certain progress with respect to some other colonial questions. The problem of Western Sahara, for instance, has entered a decisive stage, and we believe that given the necessary political will a solution on the basis of the referendum for self-determination is within reach.

Admittedly, the process of decolonization is not yet complete. The United Nations may have some way to go before the goal of the universal implementation of the Declaration on decolonization is achieved. The fact that the list of the remaining 18 Non-Self-Governing Territories contains mainly small Territories in the Pacific and the Caribbean does not make this obligation on the part of the United Nations less important, although it is obvious that we should take into account the specific nature of each one of them.

The world Organization should continue to contribute resolutely, as it has done since its founding, to the completion of the process of decolonization. The dynamic developments in the world and the profound changes they have brought about make it incumbent upon us to look at the process of decolonization from a different angle.

The experience we have gained from the latest developments in the world reinforces our conviction that the role of the United Nations in the field of decolonization is of paramount importance. Time has also proved that with political will and mutual co-operation by all concerned colonial problems can be settled peacefully. As in other areas of international life dialogue and co-operation in this field are the propoer avenues to pursue if we are to achieve the desired results. Confrontation belongs to the era we are leaving behind, and we should all invest our efforts in strengthening the orientation towards co-operation in all fields of international life.

(Mr. Silovic, Yugoslavia)

To make our contribution more effective we should strive to reach consensus on resolutions and decisions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. In so doing we shall make them binding on all and ensure their full implementation.

The spirit of co-operation should also guide the work of the Special Committee of 24. As a member, Yugoslavia is ready to engage actively in promoting co-operation in the Special Committee and in the General Assembly. In our view the Special Committee should work in a more innovative manner, adjusting its methodology to the new international realities and atmosphere as well as to the needs and specific conditions in each of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

We also hope that the administering Powers will co-operate with the Special Committee in creating the political, economic, social and other conditions necessary for the autonomous and independent development of the populations of Non-Self-Governing Territories. This would enable them to exercise their legitimate right to self-determination freely and without outside pressure, in a form reflecting their authentic interests and aspirations.

Yugoslavia and other non-aligned countries have always attached priority importance to the process of decolonization. At their initiative the General Assembly proclaimed the Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and requested the Secretary-General to propose a plan of action that would bring about a world free of colonialism in the twenty-first century.

Yugoslavia, as current Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, has submitted a relevant draft decision in document A/45/L.18, for adoption by the General Assembly. To facilitate the implementation of the plan of action the Non-Aligned Movement has decided to set up a working group, which will take an active part in that implementation.

(Mr. Silovic, Yugoslavia)

In conclusion I should like to emphasize once again that the process of decolonization will be completed only when the people of the very last Non-Self-Governing Territory are afforded the opportunity to decide freely and independently on their future. That will mark the beginning of a new era of democratic and equitable relations in international life in the next century, which was the goal of the United Nations at the time it embraced the Declaration.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.